

SUBJECT: Allowing single county rural rail districts

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Alexander, Siebert, Edwards, Finnell, Hawley, Hill, Pickett, Uher
0 nays
1 absent — Hartnett

WITNESSES: For — Barry M. Bone, Brookhollow Corporation
Against — None

DIGEST: HB 2462 would allow a county to create a rural rail transportation district in order to develop, finance, maintain or operate a new rail system or to make improvements to an existing line. The rail district's boundaries would be the same as the county in which the district was created or located.

HB 2462 would require the commissioners court to designate the name of the rail district and appoint at least four county residents to serve as district directors for two-year terms. The county commissioners court could dissolve the rail district if it determined that dissolution would not impair a contract obligation of the district or if another district that included that county and met other legal requirements was created.

HB 2462 would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 2462 would promote more economic development opportunities for rural counties. Currently rural rail districts can only be created by two or more counties acting together. With HB 2462, a single county could assist its local businesses by supplying a transportation outlet or access to a rail connection to facilitate shipping of their goods and products.

Market developments in the rail transportation field have resulted in some rural areas losing their access to regularly scheduled or competitively priced freight rail service. This bill would allow individual counties to take

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necessary measures to create rail transportation alternatives to serve the essential needs of their citizens.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.